

789 to represent the storm. Thus the storm is pressed onto the ground,
 821 as it were. If the storm is already approaching, they beat a
 plantain stalk to tatters on the ground of the village square, and as
 they do so, they exclaim:

[539] okū[š] a lūde ma a lūd: Okā[k] nkia
 Storm, it pass by me, by (pass), (to) Okak in the west.

3. Astronomy

821 Even for a primitive people the astronomical knowledge of
 772 the Pangwe is very limited. This fact can be excused only in part
 by the unfavorable conditions of their country (rainy forest region).

The Pangwe have the same conception of the earth as that of the "ancients," that is to say, they think of it as flat like a plate and surrounded on all sides by the ocean. Over the earth and the ocean arches the sky which, as is stated in the creation story, originated as a part of the earth that was blasted off and raised up on high. In other words, the sky is thought of as firm and finitely bounded, just as is the earth. One should, accordingly, imagine a large bell jar placed over a gigantic plate in the center of which the earth floats in water, and this gives one the conception held by the Pangwe. As regards the earth, they naturally think only of Africa, that is, they conceive of it as one single continuous land mass.

The sky is infinitely high; the tallest mountains known to the Pangwe do not extend into it. One would have to set about 200 or more silk-cotton trees (*Ceiba*, on the average 70 meters tall) end on end in order to touch the sky.

821 The material of the sky is similar to that of the earth, and,
 823 like it, it is harder and firmer on the inside and softer, more fluid on the outside -- a train of thought engendered by the swamps and the softened loam soil. Just as the crust of the earth forms clods, so the outer surface of the sky forms "scales" (eb[is] e džob "scales of the sky," that is to say, clouds). The clouds, however, are

266 Boulou and Ntounou, who often fought the Fang, do not accuse them of cannibalism, which seems to prove that this /practice/ was restricted to "foreign" wars, to conquests. Intestinal cannibalism was held in horror and practiced only by sorcerers, often called bedi bôt, man-eaters. Di nlem, usually translated as "soul eating," means literally "to eat the thoracic organs" and may be applied to outright material consumption of these internal organs. On the other hand, the anthropophagy or "necropophagy" that might be qualified as homeopathic, which consists of swallowing in a bian (mbian) a tiny amount, often as ash, of an ancestor's or an initiate's body, has nothing criminal about it and apparently used to be part of all important rites. /113/ From this point of view, the communion meal of the body of the sô, if this rite is truly totemic, represented perhaps manducation of the ancestor.

As for gastronomic cannibalism, it is a story for the picture papers. Not only man's flesh but even that of anthropoids, aside from the cases mentioned above, is absolutely taboo /the plural bityi is used here. —Tr. /, and accidental consumption or consumption enforced by absolute necessity (for instance, if hunters are marooned by a flood) entails rigorous purification.

c. Elements of Cosmogony

772 Our knowledge of the traditional world view is largely conjectural too, for the reasons already pointed out. We may state with reasonable certainty two fundamental concepts:

Orientation of space and time referred to the apparent movement of the sun; perhaps it would be better to speak of space-time, as the two ideas are closely connected.

The principle described by Stoll as "double symmetry," which could also be called "sexual complementarity" and summed up as the equilibrium in tension of all elements of the universe /création/.

These two concepts are, as things stand, tied together if not inseparable.

Time and space flow from east to west in a declining movement. East is ôku, upstream, high, and male; west, nke, is downstream, low, and female. The earth, si, is surrounded by water, or rather, enclosed by water and darkness, /thus/, ndim = blind; mendim =

772 water; dim = to terminate, to extinguish, to sink (in connection with
 123 a star); dimi = to get lost; dip = to close; dibi = dark, opaque. (According to Trezenem, the world is surrounded by the river éndam, a word related to ndam = width, wide.) The darkness of the east is black (cf. the name of the land of origin, mvô' ékanga = country of high white clouds; low dark rain clouds are minkut); the darkness of the west is white, the feminine color, white, moreover, being the color of mourning and death. The bekôn are white, at least those that remain on earth; those admitted to Zambe's village are red.

In relation to the east-west axis, north is on the right, mbo nnôm, male side, south is on the left, mbo ngal, female side. The dividing line between north and south is the Sanaga (Osôé Nnanga = white river, river of the albinos) crossed by the python, mvôm, who is also the rainbow (though a Fang tradition in eastern Gabon mentions a river, the Evindi, that is, "black"). North is connected with red (1), the

[822]

1. Evindi, éfumulu, and évele, "black," "white," and "red," are the only names of colors in the language. They are applied to the near shades: a grey is "white" or "black," a blue or green is "black," ochre or light brown is "red," light yellow is "white," etc. For greater exactness, similes are used — zo'obon, "aquatic moss," for green, jôp, "sun," "egg yolk," for orange or yellow — or loan words like "blue."

masculine /115/ and festival color. South is also noon, midday, zane mos, and the zenith, yôbe jôp (yôp = sky, high, height; jôp sun, in Fang, dzô); it is the side of light, vian, sunlight, or éfufup, brightness.

[821]

The sky, yôp, seems to be supported by an iron post (akoñ = post or spear, a masculine symbol) held by the sister-wife of Zambe, Nyngon Mebe'e. The sky appears both masculine and feminine, like the earth; the sun is masculine, the moon feminine.

Thus we come to define two opposing directions or sectors on the compass card: the N/E quadrant is male; the S/W quadrant is female — the two others seem to be neuter. The NE-SW diameter bisects

772 the two opposite angles and would represent the axis of migration,
 623 mfa'a mañ, "toward the sea." The masculine direction seems to have
 been the place of origin of the ye (feminine?) clans, the feminine
 direction, that of the ésa clans. Trilles places with the latter the ébi
 clans, which are, geographically, from eastern clans; I wonder if
 they ought not rather to be connected with the ye clans since ébi
 means "hole," "chasm" (yee = valley, ravine). In the bilaba,
 masculine commodities come from the female sector, and vice versa.

772 These apparent contradictions would be resolved by applying the
 principle of double symmetry, or of sexual complementarity, similar
 [601] to that which makes paternal, nonuterine half brothers called bobenyañ,
 "my mother's sons." This principle might be expressed somewhat as
 follows: every being capable of life must, in order to exist and be
 complete, include the opposite sex. In other words, bisexuality, a
 universal vital principle, should be found in every part of the universe
 /création/. Stoll finds proof of this in the language, where the tone
 [194] levels in his view constitute genuine differentiation by grammatical
 sex genders, and especially in the rites whose purpose appears to be
 not to make men entirely masculine or women entirely feminine, but
 rather to give to each sex the necessary complement of the opposite
 sex.

[114] Whatever may be thought of this theory, it is a fact that, because
 of the apparent or real absence of grammatical sex gender in the
 language, the majority of the early writers, even Trilles, did not
 attach enough importance to real gender, to the sex actually attributed
 to objects, particularly to magical and ritual materials. We know
 that spear, akonñ, saber, fa, and probably the large drum, mbaé, are
 male; calabashes and cooking pots, rattles (mengonñ), the double bell
 (nkeñ) are female; the drum-telephone, nkul, is androgynous; horns
 for medicaments, minlak, are male at the pointed end, female at
 801 the hollow end, and the same with the rifle. As to numbers, my con-
 clusions are diametrically opposed to those of Stoll, who believes
 even numbers to be male, and odd, female, though admittedly
 he advances as proof the large part played by odd numbers in feminine
 rites, which runs directly counter to his theory of double symmetry.

The numerical system is in any event only imperfectly known.
 [802] Counting is based on 10, with traces of an 8:10, (awôm), basis /116/
 and of 8, mwom, /having?/ perhaps the same root as different
 classifiers. The so number is 9. Nyñ, 4, seems related to a YI